

Short and Plain
DISCOURSE

O F

Justifying Faith.

B E I N G

A Chapter of a Book Intituled

A Discourse Of

Regeneration, Faith and Repentance,
Preached at the Merchants Lecture
in Broad-street.

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READER,

THE have in this small but pithy Discourse, a clear and Orthodox Account of a great and useful point of Faith, so differently spoke of by Divines in our day

Here you have the Middle Path kept betwixt the Antenorian, on the Right, and the Arminian on the Left-hand, here we may see the absolute necessity of fixing Anchor, on that firm and sure Ground of Christ's most Consummate Obedience Active and Pervasive, which is our alone Righteousness before God, Imputed to us, and Received by Faith, as the alone Instrument.

And yet good Works and Inherent Righteousness are not Decryed as useless and unnecessary in the Person Justified, but in the contrary tho' they are Excluded from being the cause of our Justification before God, yet they are necessary on many Scores, which cannot be here enlarged upon, they are via ad regnum, tho' not causa Regnandi, Good Evidences, tho' not the Formalis ratio of our Justification, there being no Safety for Condemned Sinners, but by taking Sanctuary under the Covert of Blood, should we come before the Lord, and bow our selves before the High GOD, should we come before him with burnt Offerings, with Calves of a year Old, would he be pleas'd with Thousands of Rams, or with Ten Thousand Rivers of Oyl, should we give our first born for our Transgression, the Fruit of our Body for the Sin of our Soul, it would be so far from Atoning and Propitiating an Angry God, it would provoke him the more, so far from extinguishing his fiery Indignation, it would inflame it the more against us. Nothing but the Embroidered Robes of Christ's most perfect Righteousness can Cover us from the Stormy Tempest of his Wrath. All other Coverings even the most Evangelical Holiness of the most perfect Saints on Earth, or in Heaven, will be found too short and too narrow.

I was determined to print this Chapter by it self, from the Consideration of the Books being in Few Persons hands, and that this great Truth here Treated of (tho' of the last Consequence as being articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiae) is alase too little Studied and known, yet too much Impugn'd and Oppos'd in our day.

How we are justified by FAITH.

WE ought to be Doers of the Word and not Hearers only, to maintain good Works for necessary uses, *Tit: 3, 14.* It behoveth us therefore to know what use we should make of our works and doings in the great business of our Salvation, so as not to entrench upon the Righteousness of Christ, nor to degrade that from being our sole and only justifying Righteousness. Some men are as much mistaken in grounding their Salvation upon doing, as others are in grounding it upon bare hearing; and therefore these things must be warily spoken unto, and warily understood. When we urge the necessity of doing the word of God, Carnal Reason lies at the catch, and is ready to take every thing in a wrong sense and meaning, and to bring down the Mysteries of the Gospel to a low Legal vulgar Notion more suitable to humane Reason. There are two extremes that men are apt to run into; either they neglect good works, or else they trust

in good works ; either they do in a careless formal presumptuous manner,, pretend to cast all upon Christ, without any serious inquiries after the Truth, of Grace in themselves, or ever proving it by its Fruits ; conceiving it altogether needless to be any way active in their own salvation, Secondly If upon search they find any aetings of Grace in their Hearts, any fruits of Grace in their Lives, these are their own proper goods they think, Money found in their own Purses ; it matters not how they came by it, they have it, and they are resolved to convert it to their own proper use, making it nothing less than a part of their Justifying Righteousness.

Those of this way, with whom I have now to do, do state the matter thus.

They say, that Christ is the meritorious cause of our Justification, having by his Death satisfied the Law, and discharged us from the Curse of it ; and so far we agree with them.

They say further, That Christ to compleat our Justification, hath also purchased for us strength and ability to perform the condition of the new Covenant (this we assent to) the performance of which according to them, is to be taken in as a part of our Justifying Righteousness, and this we deny.

We say the performance of what is required in the New Covenant, is a good Justification of the Cause, whether it be of Faith or of Good Works, or of any particular thing or action, the sincerity and truth of which may be in question. but we deny that it adds any thing to the Justification of the

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A Discourse of Faith.

person, and therefore they speak not *ad idem*, to the same thing, when they deny Christ's imputed Righteousness to be the sole Righteousness that justifies the Person, because there is another Righteousness required, upon another account to justify or clear up the sincerity of our Faith and Holiness; I say to clear up this to our selves and other men, which we deny not. For we do not admit any Faith to be a justifying, Faith but upon good evidence of the Truth of it, neither do we admit any works to be good works but upon full proof of the goodness of them.

The Sum of all is this; we say, Faith and Obedience once proved to be true and genuine, are good evidences of our interest in Christ, whose imputed Righteousness is the sole and only Righteousness by which our Persons are universally justified from all charges and blame whatsoever, in the sight of God, and to say otherwise is in effect to say that Christ died to justify us, that we might be justified without him; or at least not only and solely by him; which is highly derogatory to the Death of Christ, neither will their owning Christ to be the meritorious cause of our Justification salve the matter, while they do in any sense require another Righteousness distinct from that of Christ's for the justification of our Persons in the sight of God.

And having given you this brief account of the matter in difference, I shall now proceed.

The Point in General which I am to speak to is this. That though good works are highly necessary in a justified person, yet are they not required in any way of causality to the Iustification of the Person. Or thus, no part of our inherent Righteousness can be any part of our justifying Righteousness.

This I might prove to you many ways.

First, From the subject of Iustification, an ungodly Person, a believing Sinner flying in the Sentie of Sin unto Iesu Christ for Life and Pardon. Sin is that from which we are Iustified, the Righteousnes of Christ is that for which or by which we are Iustified; *Act. 13. 39.*

Secondly, Because there must be a change of state in Iustification, and by Iustification, before we can derive any saving Grace from Christ to enable us to the least good work. I might also.

Thirdly, Argue from the weakness and imperfection of all Inherent Holines which is not able to justifie it self, much less the Person.

And many Arguments may be brought; but my design is to contract this general to a particular point, concerning the "credere, or the act of believing; and I shall shew that that part of our inherent Righteousness that flows from our doing the Word of God, that is, the Work of Faith as done by us in an act of believing, is no part of our justifying

fying Righteoufness. This is that which seems to have the fairest claim to, and interest in, our Iustification ; and if this be disproved, the Argument will hold a *fortiori* against all the inferiour branches of our inherent Righteousness ; they must be forced to quit their claim also.

That which seems to intitle Faith to such an Interest in our Iustification as is pleaded for by some, is the phrase and manner of expression which the Scripture uses in speaking of Faith, telling us that Faith is imputed to us for Righteousness, that we are justified by Faith : that he that believes shall be saved, and the like.

The question is, in what sense these Scriptures are to be understood ; whither we are to take up our standing partly in the act of Faith, and partly in the object of Faith, making up a Righteousness partly from our selves, and partly from Christ, or whether we are by Faith to go out of our selves unto Christ for our whole, sole and only justifying Righteousness ; and this is that which I affirm, and shall endeavour to make good, and shew you that the Scriptures alledged do not ascribe our Justification to the Act, but wholly to the Object of Faith ; not to our believing, but to Christ believed on, which I prove thus :

First, from those Expressions of Scripture peculiar to holy Writ, by which the Holy Ghost doth of set purpose limit Faith to its Object, *John 6. 47. Rom. 9. 33. Ephes. 1. 13. πιστεύειν εἰς, εἰπειν εἰς*, to believe in, into, or upon Christ, which plainly

plainly points out this, that Faith is always to be taken in relation to its Object ; that by Faith is meant Christ apprehended by Faith. Life is promised, not simply to believing, but to believing in ; in whom ? in Christ, or nothing. Faith is a relative term (as to its whole sense and signification) to the Object Christ. It must be Faith in Christ, or Faith in nothing. Believing is a Scripture Phrase, setting forth our leaning upon Christ. Faith as our Act adds nothing to Christ. doth not make his Death satisfactory ; it was so in its self before, though by an applicatory act of Faith it is made so to us ; that is, we do reap the benefites of his Death and satisfaction ; we are not united to Faith, but by Faith we are united to Christ. Faith is the *Medium uniens*; we do not trust in our Faith, but by Faith we trust in Christ ; all that Faith signifies is in relation to Christ ; all that it doth, is in the Name of Christ; without Christ it signifies nothing, it doth nothing, it is nothing. When we are said to be justified by the Faith of Christ, or justified by Faith in Christ, *Gal. 2, 16.* pray must the meaning be, that we are justified by Faith, and Christ as some would have it, giving the priority to Faith, and making Christ but a remote cause of our justification, and our inherent Righteousness to be the next and immediate cause ? Were Men more willing to exalt Christ, and debase themselves, this would be *English* plain enough : Faith in Christ would then signifie but one Righteousness ; it would not be Faith and Christ. Let Men have a care how they speak unadvisedly of Christ to the lessening and diminution of his Honour :

hour: God hath said he is our Righteousness without any Limitation, without any restriction: Now for Men to say, ay but not all our Righteousness, not our only Righteousness; I say, 'tis a bold word thus to distinguish whatever remote inferences they may gather out of Scripture to justify their meaning; yet since God hath not thought fit to drop any such diminutive expression of Christ in Scripture, I say it is a bold word for Men to speak. You may see how severely speaking against God was punished, *Numb. 21. 5. 6.* And God complains of it, *Ezek. 35. 13.* *With your mouths ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard them.* We may safely deny any thing of God that implies weakness or imperfection; but to deny that of Christ which tends to the Exaltation of his Name and riches of his Grace; let Men distinguish how they will, it is dangerous meddling here: This is a tender point; that is the first.

Secondly, If the bare act of Faith without any relation to the object, justifies; then any act of Divine Faith will justifie us as well as Faith in Christ: for the Act is specified by the Object: Take away the Object, and all Acts of Faith are alike, equally insignificant. But I proceed.

Thirdly, To the third Argument that shall be drawn from the Nature of Faith, which consists in receiving. As it is the Act of a Believer, it implies doing; but properly as an Act of believing; it consists in receiving, and that with an empty hand: Now the question is whether by

this

this receiving **A&t** of Faith there do redound to us a Righteousness of our own, distinct from that which we receive from Christ ? I say no : We are not justified by a Righteousness that we do, but by a Righteousness that we receive : Now the bare Act of receiving in a common Natural way, is not counted morally meritorious : A Beggars receiving Alms, argues no merit in the Receiver, but meer Grace in the Donor. We count that he who only receives a benefit, he doth nothing for it, it comes freely : Indeed he doth something naturally in receiving, but nothing morally by way of merit for the thing received. Thus it is among Men, and so we understand it, in all such actings of ours ; but when we come to deal with God, how do our proud hearts put a Value upon them ; then we put a value upon every thing, upon our coming, upon our adhereing, upon our relying, upon our asking, upon our receiving ; We grow proud of those very Acts of Grace by which we do express our Poverty and Beggary, our absolute Dependance upon another ; as if Christ was beholden to us for our accepting of him : So naturally prone are we to rest upon any thing that looks like our own doing.

Bretheren ! there are two things to be considered in Faith.

(1.) The Motion of the Soul in receiving, which is an Act naturally necessary to all manner of receiving ; it is as reaching forth, and opening the hand.

(2.) You may consider the Passive reception it self, wherein the Nature of Faith doth chiefly consist, in admitting, applying and owning the Gift.

Though the word Believing doth Grammatical-ly imply an Action, yet really and Physically we are passive in believing: For these Reasons.

First, The first Reason is this; They who make our **Act** of Believing a part of our Justifying Righteousness, do manifestly make Faith to contradict it self in and by its own **Act**: If by an **Act** of believing we go out of our selves to Christ for all: I do not see how by the same **Act** we can possibly settle upon any thing in our selves that is not Christ: If by being justified by faith they understand the **Obje&** of Faith, then we agree with them; then Faith and Christ is all one: by faith we mean Christ applyed and nothing but Christ. But if they understand the bare **Act** of believing in distinction from Christ the **Object**; therein we differ from them. And they must so understand it who make our **Act** of Believing a part of our Justifying Righteousness distinct from Christ's Righteousness; and therein I say, they make faith to contradict itself in and by its own **Act**: I do not know whether I am understood; I think I understand my self, in what I have said: Take it thus, Pray consider what is the sense of a believing Soul under a present **Act** of faith in Christ? I appeal to you all, I desire you would all be Judges in this matter who have ever been serious, and in good earnest, dealing with God by an **act**

of Faith for Salvation. You believe in Christ, what is the *English* of that? What do you mean by it? Is not this your sense; you desire to cast your self wholly upon Christ, to be found in Christ not having on your own Righteousness; to be built upon that Foundation, to lay hold on Eternal Life in Christ; to go out of your selves unto Christ for Righteousness and Life; to seek that in another which you have not in your selves; to count all things, but loss and dung that you may win Christ; don't you mean this? Pray what an absurdity then is it, what a gross contradiction to say I am justified by something in my selfe, by virtue of that very act of faith, by which I do purposely go out of my self to Christ, for all. If this be Reason and sense, I have quite lost the use of both, and will never pretend to understand any thing. But how do some Men fight with their own Shadows, and lose themselves in their own expressions. They cannot speak of Christ, and of the way and manner of applying Christ, but presently they must be Co-workers with Christ in their Justification.

Brethren! We must not be perswaded out of our Christian Names, nay out of Christianity it self by those who would impose their own notions upon us, and indeed preach another Gospel let them read on and trimble. But I will say this, that if *Paul* were alive, and should hear any Man upon Earth, or Angel from Heaven compound Faith and Works, Works and Christ in the matter of our Justification, I doubt not but he would curse

curse them in the name of the Lord. Certainly we are not to be Close-mouthed, and silently suffer the grand principles of the Gospel to be decryed, as if we doubted whether they are true or no. These are the Pillars of the House, all fall with them, if they be taken away. These are the Ancient Land marks and bounds of our Religion ; they must not be removed, for if you suffer that, you will quickly have a dead Child in the room of the living. New Notions, though not contray to any received foundation, should be warily uttered ; but supposing there is the least discrepancy or opposition, it is our duty and Wisdom to be silent, and not break the eye of the Needle, by forcing our Camel through. New Notions must yield rather to antient received Truths, they must be governed and overuled by them. It is dangerous to force plain Scripture, and plain principles to make good our own private interpretations.

2. Our act of believing is no part of our justifying Righteousness, because justification is an act of God : not properly subsequent to our Faith, but simultaneous with it. They are concomitants, so close, so instantanious, that we cannot say which is first, or last in time ; we cannot say the one takes its rise from the other. I explain my self thus ; it is one thing for the Scripture to speak Doctrinally of Faith, another thing to speak of a Believer under the actual exercise of Faith. When the Scripture speaks of the Doctrine of Faith in the Abstract, it tells us the conseqents

qments of it, that according to Gods order and appointment, Faith is requisite unto Justification, and so Faith is antecedent to Justification, and Justification is spoken of as a thing to come, upon our believing. The Doctrine of Faith shews what shall be to all who obtain it; the actual exercise of Faith shews what is to them who have it, and do believe it. It is not only he that believes shall be saved and justified, but is justified. It is true, who ever believes shall be saved; the just shall live by faith, this is Doctrinally true. But he that believes hath everlasting Life *John 3. 39.* is justified; this is experimentally true. God if you rightly consider the point, doth justify us, by working Faith in us It is his way of justifying; it is the way God hath chosen to communicate the Righteousness of God, which is a stupendious Mystery, and cannot be otherwise applied to the Soul. He doth not Justifie us because of any antecedent act of Faith we have lying by us, and which we could now produce as a price (as it were) and Meritorious Means of our Justification, God justifies us by working Faith in us; God being willing in so great an act of Grace; to speak to our Understandings and Knowledge, he hath appointed Faith as a fit means by which the soul not only doth the thing, but also lets in a sense of what is done upon the soul; and therefore saith the Apostle, *it is of faith that it might be of grace:* God will be understood in all the acts of his Grace towards us. Now that there might be in us a sense of reception of so great a benefite, God resolves to put it into the hand of Faith, which hath a natural futableness in it, and fitness

fitness to receive what free Grace tenders to it; and so it doth when it is in any strength. Christ and our Souls would never meet were it not for Faith. There is no letting down any thing spiritual and supernatural into the Soul, but by Faith; Faith is our *modus habendi*, it is the *way* the *means* by which we come to have God and Christ, and an interest in the things of Heaven. We have what we have from Christ by Faith, and we hold it by Faith. Faith and Repentance as acted by us, and reflected upon, are very good Evidences of our Justifications, for it is in that reflection only that they do give evidence of themselves, and of any thing produced from them. Therefore, I say, as they are reflected upon they have retrospection to our Justification, of which they are very good and Evident Proofs; but they have no antecedent causality to produce the thing signified, because they signify it, as a thing already done, past and perfect.

3. And lastly, Justification is frequently set down in Scripture without any relation to these acts of Grace in us, to shew that it wholly flowes from Christ; and that by our believing we add nothing to our Justifying Righteousness, but do only apply it, as wholly derived from Christ alone—
I Joh. 5. 12. He that hath the Son hath Life; they that are in Christ there is no Condemnation to them, *Rom. 8. 1.* Now because we cannot admit sinners to be in Christ but by Faith, therefore what flows from Christ is attributed unto Faith; which is, I say, our *modus habendi*, but still the real cause of our Justification, that which makes us just

just in the sight of God, is our being in Christ, and our having the Son. There is no mention made of having any thing else ; but faith is our *modus habendi* ; we cannot have the Son but by faith, nor be in Christ but by Believing. Therefore God speaks, to our Understanding, and hath attributed that to the act of Faith, which is only derivable from the Object.

I shall now shew you the weakness of those Grounds and reasons they go upon, who differ from us in this point.

1. They speak much of a Charge of Infidelity, Impenitency and Unholiness to be drawn up against us at the last day, and therefore it concerns us to muster up all our good works, all our acts of Grace, and every part of our inherent Righteousness, that we may be in a readiness to answer to this Charge and clear our selves.

A specious Argument ! enongh to amuse the World, and fright men back into the Popish Doctrine of Justification by Works.

Brethren ! I do not deny that unbelieving, impenitent and ungodly Persons shall be charged with infidelity, impenitency and ungodliness, and be condemned ; but to talk of a charge of Infidelity against a Believer at the last day, I say, it is a groundless, unscriptural Notion. I do not deny that the Faith of the Saints that draws them to Christ, and its efficacy afterwards in all its fruits, will be taken notice of by Christ, when they are admitted into the Kingdom, *Mat. 25.*

34. *Come ye blessed ;* and when that blessedness is fixed, Christ doth not put them upon the proof of their Faith, but helps them himself to understand the former actings of their Faith and love to God, which they were ignorant of before. *When saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty & gave thee drink &c. In as much as ye have done it to one of the least of these, ye have done it to me, I see more Grace in you than in Christ, than ever you saw in your selves, so and so appearing in your lives ; Come ye blessed.*

Brethren, good Works are good Evidences to us, to make out the Truth of Grace in us ; but the All-knowing God needs no such Evidences for his Information he knows what is in man, and needs not that any should tell him. He searches the Heart. Though we see Grace only in the Fruit, yet God sees it in the Root and Principle. Besides, I conceive, the last Judgment is not to prove who is, and who is not in a state of Grace ; but rather to pronounce the Sentence according to the state that every one shall appear in at the Resurrection. there will be no doubt of any mans state at the Resurrection, the method and manner of the Resurrection will decide it. Christ himself will separate the Sheep from the Goats ; and he will do this before the Judgment, *Mat. 25. 32. 33.* You shall know a Believer then by his Station at the right hand of Christ ; by his Company among the Sheep. The Angels are sent forth, *Mat. 24. 31.* together up the Elect from the four Winds, from the one end of Heaven to the other. They will ransack every corner of the World to find out every Saint : not only the Ninety and Nine, but the whole Hundred shall be presented to God; not

one missing, we shall all stand together. Now after they are thus ranked by Christ, and the Angels have declared them to be Sheep, to be true Believers, must they come under a Charge of infidelity? Who must draw up this charge, and manage this false indictment? Either God, or good Angels, or Conscience or the Devil. God he hath justified them here, sealed them by the Spirit of Adoption to the day of Redemption, and he will never reverse his judgment.

The judgment of God at the last day will be pursuant to the judgment already past by his Word and Spirit in the Hearts and Consciences of Believers here. Good Angels are employed to gather up the Elect, and Consequently they have a true discerning who they are. Our Consciences are sprinkled with the Blood of Jesus, and have an answer in readiness, by the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead. And the Devil will have something else to do in that day, when he stands at the head of the Wicked to receive his sentence with them, the time of his torment being then come. Though he be now the accuser of the Brethren day and night before God, he must then Eternally be cast down. True, he is now our accuser, and we must labour to overcome him by the Blood of the Lamb, as *Rev.* 12. 10. 11. that is, by Arguments drawn from the Blood of Jesus; yet I say fear him not after death. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death, saith the Apostle; and must we have an after rancou-
ter with the Devil? Must we be set upon a fresh by him? No, no, after death he hath done with you

you for ever; he will not dare to look you in the face at the last day: He drew up a charge against you? You shall accuse, judge and condemn him, and all the Devils in Hell, *1 Cor: 6. 3.* Never fear, you that dye in the Lord, shall rise up under those undeniable evidences of a state of Grace, that neither the Devils nor Wicked Men shall dare to gainsay. What must poor Christians who have lived under doubts, fears, under buffetings and temptations, under accusations and challenges from the Devil and their own Consciences, must they rise so? Is this to be raised in power, with our Spirits made perfect! Surely *Paul* was out in his triumph, *Rom: 8. 33*, *Who shall lay any thing to the Charge of Gods elect?* Do you make good your Title to Christ now, and never fear any charges afterwards at that day; it will be a joyful day to Believers. *Look up faith Christ, lift up your heads for your Redemption drawth nigh, Luke 21, 28.* And therefore comfort one another; your Witness is in Heaven, and your Record is on high, as *Job* speaks, God, Christ, Angels, Conscience, will all be on your side.

Aye, but if this feigned Process be not observed, some mens notions will fall to the Ground. Aye and let them fall: no matter how soon; for they are not grounded upon the Word of God that endureth for ever. Brethren we must not draw Schemes and Models from our own Brain; and when we have done, impose them upon God; and make his proceedings in every particular exactly to suit the methods of Humane Judges: The natural notion of these things is so strong in some mens heads, that it doth carry them

them out beyond the line of the Gospel. Good works certainly do best furthest off from the Judgment seat of God. They are good and comfortable evidences here, but they will make but a sorry Righteousness there for us to plead. Though God may and will take notice of all the fruits of his Grace appearing in our words or works, when he passeth the solemn declaratory Sentence at the last day, which is but a fuller manifestation of our justification. God will personally and publickly own that which he hath secretly in our Consciences, done by his Word and Spirit in us. God doth now act mediately by his word, then he will act immediately by himself; we shall hear the Sentence of our Justification from his own mouth, which now we hear only from the mouths of his Ministers that speak to us in his Name.

Secondly, the second ground they go upon is this, they say, that it is a conditional service imposed upon us by God in the new Covenant; and therefore the performance of it must needs be part of our Justifying Righteousness; which is very specious, and very suitable to Humane Reason, as most things are that contradict the Mysteries of the Gospel, but is of like sound and signification with the other.

Alas! At how little a hole will self Righteousness creep in? How apt are we in the pride of our hearts to distinguish our self-Righteousness into our Justification, that we may have somewhat whereof to glory. To prevent mistakes I will premise on thing; that is this, I do not deny, but that to believe in God, in Christ, is an eminent piece of service, a great act of Divine Worship,

ship, the greatest act of Worship we can perform to God on this side Heaven. But I deny that it is a service done in order to the procuring or purchasing those benefites which we receive from Christ as his free Gift. Faith receives what Christ hath already procured. Faith doth not come to Christ to desire him to dye for us; but having dyed for us, it comes for the fruit of his death: It comes on no other Errand but to receive what is already prepared. Faith hath no causality or efficiency at all in contriving, compassing, constituting the great act of Grace, wherein the pardon of our sin and our justification is held forth unto us. Our faith did not move God to promise pardon, but finding all this Grace in Jesus, Faith applyes it, lays hold on it, and God gives us leave, nay commands us to do this. So that Faith is a service we owe to God by way of duty in compliance with his free Grace towards us, but it is not a service done by us in way of procuring that which is freely given. No, no, we owe that to Christ and not to Faith. Brethren! In common acceptation, when we say come to me, & I will do this and that for you, pray who is the doer, he that comes to have the thing done, or he that doth it. Certainly if coming be a service in this case, it is a service done to a mans self, and can never be urged as a service done to God.

But they further say, that this is a conditional service: Why? Because God hath commanded us to believe that we may be justified. Commanded us to believe and pray, what is that? I told you before the meaning of an act of Faith, even to renounce our own Righteousness, to come in our nakednes and poverty to Christ, without Money

or without Moneys worth, that we may be enriched by him in all things. Is not this the old, honest, plain down-right notion of believing ? And is this the Conditional service required ? Why don't you do it then ? Who is against it ? Only let them attend to the sense of Faith, and not be carried away with the meer word and talk of Faith, as their own act, never regarding the inward sense and signification of the thing it self. Hath God required us to believe in Jesus : let us know what that means and do it ; no body is against it. If that be the Conditional service, let them lie low before God, and seem more vile in their own eyes, and cast themselves upon Christ forall. Let them learn to come without Money. This is the proper Obedience of Faith ; that Obedience which the Doctrine of the Gospel doth require ; and since you will call this a condition, I say why don't you perform it ? Is this the performance of such a condition of believing, according to the sense and meaning of believing, to tell the World that Christ is not our only Justifying Righteousness, that we must seek for something in our selves to joyn with him, if ever we will be saved ? Is this the Condition ? Doth God mean this, when he bids me believe in Jesus ? Sirs ! Let us not read our Bibles backwards ; wresting Scripture to our own destruction : It is strange to me, that Faith which is all along in Scripture opposed to Works in our Justification, and is appointed by God to shut all good Works out of Justification, should be thus made an inlet to bring all good works into Justification. Oh ! That we were more under the powerful actings of true Justifying Faith, it would

would then open it self more fully to us, and shew us it's meaning, I wish we could a little better understand the actings of our faith understand the reason, the sense of it, the importance, the intent of an act of Faith; what a thing Faith is.

3dly. They suppose a double Justification, and a double Justifying Righteousness; the first to justify us from the accusations of the Law, the other to Justifie the sincerity of our Faith and Holiness; and here comes in all our inherent Righteousness. This is specious too: But I would not have men coyn new heads of Divinity to make good their own notions. We know but of one Justification, I say the second Justification, which they talk of, it is implied in the first; and therefore needless and unscriptural: For since the Revelation of the Gospel, infidelity and unbelief is a sin against the Moral Law; and Faith in Christ is enjoyned as a duty by the Moral Law; by which we take God to be our God, and consequently do bind our selves over to believe whatsoever he had, or hereafter should reveal to be his Will. This we are bound to by the Moral Law; therefore if we are (as they themselves affirm) freed by Justification from the Law of Works upon the condition of Faith, then we are on our first Justification absolutely freed from infidelity, and our Faith is sufficiently approved to be true, and what then need a second Justification, unless we will suppose an error in the first Judgment: which is impious to suppose; as if God should acquit us from the accusation of the Law of Works upon the condition of Faith; which upon after examination, Christ discouers to be false and un-

sound

found. So that these things do not hang together.

Fourthly, they say that Faith and Holiness are conditions and evidences of our title to Christ, and all that comes by him ; and therefore part of our Justifying Righteousness.

It is hard to understand the strength of some mens reasoning ; but grant all this, it amounts to no more but Christ, and a title to Christ, so far we are agreed, for we desire no more. But how they will make Faith which is our title to Christ; and unto which Christ and all his benefits are by the Gospel granted, promised and made over ; how they will make this title never so well evidenced, to be part of our Justifying Righteousness, I see not : A title adds nothing to the inheritance, makes it neither more nor less, but conveys it down to us, according to the intrinck value of the thing, be it more or less. A title to Land is no part of the Land ; only we are invested in it as it is, by virtne of our title. Now therefore if the Righteousness of Christ be not of it self sufficient to justifie us, I see not how a good title mends the matter ; for if the Estate be never so great, and we have no good title to it, it is worth nothing to us ; and if our title be never so good, we can have no more then is, and belongs to the title. So that after all this stir about conditions and evidences of our title to Christ, the result of all is this, we have a title, a good title, are under all the conditions and evidences of a good title ; but to what ? To an Inheritence that is not sufficient to maintain us, to a Righteousnes that

that is not sufficient of it self alone to justifie us; & where are we now with our conditions and evidences of our title? For ever destitute of a compleat Justifying Righteousness. Is this to preach Christ? To Preach the glad tidings of the Gospel? Is this the way to quiet and settle the Consciences of poor distressed sinners? surely no.

Fifthly, They urge the literal sense of some few Scriptures that seem to speak for them; especially two; and I do not know of more in the whole Bible, as to the literal significaeion, if there were we should hear enough of it. I know they quot many others, which add no weight at all to the Argument they would ground upon them, therefore I shall not speak to them Those two are Mat. 12. 37. *By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned;* and that in James, where it is said, *Abraham was justified by works,* James 2. 23.

For that in *Mathew*, *Calvin* charges the Papists with very great weakness in offering to draw an Argument from that Text for Justification by Works. *Maldonate* a Learned Jesuite on the other hand is very angry with *Calvin* for supposing any of the *Roman-Church* to be so weak and injudicious, as to argue so from that scripture, for, saith he, we very well understand that this Text doth not speak *De justificatione, qua justi efficimur, sed de judicis sententia, qua, sumpto ex verbis nostris argumento. justi declaramur.* So saith the Jesuite; we know the Text doth not speak of that which is the cause of our Justification, of the thing for which, and by virtue of which we become just and

and righteous, only here is the appearance of our Righteousness by our words, and we are declared to be Righteous. So that this doth not touch this cause of Justification: And yet this is the main Text brought for it, the main Proof repeated again and again, to prove inherent righteousness to have an influence into our Justification. I say, let them take the answer from the Papists or Protestants, which they please, they are both against them in this thing.

As for the other Scripture, They will take it in no other sense but what implices a contradiction to all other Texts of Scripture in the case. The whole current of Scripture is against Works in Justification, and leads us to a fair construction of that in James, that it is to be understood of a justification before men and not of a justification before God. Protestant Writers have sufficiently cleared up this, to the conviction of all but such who are resolved not to be Convinced. Certainly they should have a care how they abound too much in their own sense. The Learned Lord Bacon saith, that a little Philosophy makes men Atheists, but a great deal will convince them of a Diety. Some mens logic & School Learning overthrows Reason, which duly improved and well managed, would teach them to argue otherwise: Certainly in our Reasoning about Divine things we should be careful not to abound too much in our own sense. It is better for us to leaye the Mystery of the Gospel in its Mystery where we found it, than to seek to draw it out, and so to explain it, as to force it into the mould of Humane Reason, shaping it one every side to an exact conformity to the thoughts

thoughts and conceptions of our weak imperf^t Understanding: I say, no Gospel Truth will bear this. After all our Faith and Knowledge and Experience, we know but in part, and there is at the end of every Gospel Truth, a Mystery, something that is passing our Understanding, that calls for silence, for an holy Admiration, for humble submission in Faith to the Will of God. Therefore I would not have men speak as if they knew all, and draw particular Schemes, and it must be so, and no otherwise; and thus and thus you must proceed in this and that way and form, therefore things must be so stated.

I have done with the Argumentative part. I will now speak a word or two in a looser way of Discourse, two not bold, many noisy, but too few or none, boyld, and fit to be a good discourse. I say then thus, he may be a true Believer who doth not take his faith for any part of his Justifying Righteousness; I suppose that will be granted. But he cannot be a true Believer who takes not Christ for his Justifying Righteousness. I do not say now for his only Justifying Righteousness, because I would speak in the sense of those I suppose. I say, they cannot be Believers who do not look upon Christ as their Justifying Righteousness; but they may be true Believers who do not look upon faith as a part of their Justifying Righteousness. For the first, suppose it an Error, it is only about the act in our apprehension which doth not alter the nature of the thing at all. The second is an Error in the act, which quite destroys the very nature of faith. Therefore the safer

safer way is rather to press Persons to believe, to see they have faith indeed and in Truth, than urge them to such an unscriptural construction of their faith, putting such a title of Honour upon it to the reproach of Christ and his Righteousness. They honour faith sufficiently who only prefer Christ before it. No doubt God will give faith its due praise and place at the last day; our not knowing or not understanding the reach and truth of our faith in all circumstances of it, will be no prejudice to faith at the last day. I heartily wish, we were more in the Exercise of Faith than in Contraversies about it; more in the practise of Good Works than in Dispute about them, we should then sooner understand both the one and the other. Sirs! the mysterious sublime Doctrine of Justification was revealed for our comfort, and proposed to our faith to be believed; not to our reason to argue upon in a *Quodlibetal* manner and to fess to and fro for Argument sake. What if we know no more of Justification then is absolutely necessary for our Justification? This is the case of many plain, sincere hearted Christians; and if it were so with us all, we may have fewer Notions in our Heads, but possibly more Grace in our Hearts. The Lord grant, that we may know the Doctrine of Justification so as they know it who are saved by Christ. But *surgunt indocti & rapiunt Cælum, & nos cum doctrinis nostris sine corde, voluntamur in carne & in sanguine.* The Learned they dispute and wrangle themselves into Hell; the unlearned they believe practice and gain Heaven, taking up the truth in simplicity according to the general scope of the Gospel, as it is held forth to the

the meanest Capacity. Brethren! what *Paul* said to the Taylor, *Act* 16. 31. that I say to you all, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou and thy house shall be saved.* Don't you go home now, and tell your Families that they most not understand this Texts so as to look upon Christ as their only justifying Righteousness, but look out for something in themselves if ever they be saved. No, pray speak Scripture language, expound Scripture by Scripture, and tell them that Christ is all in all, tell them plainly that they must not be found in their own Righteousness; they must be found in *Christ, not having on their own Righteousness,* that they must count all things but loss and dung, that they may win *Christ*; that there is no other foundation but *Christ, no other name under Heaven by which they can be saved, but the Name of Christ;* tell them they must not come for Justification and Life in the name of their Good Works, of any thing that belongs to themselves; but only in the name of *Christ, promote this Doctrine in your Families and among your Children and Servants.* This is the way to save you and your Household. This is the good wholesome household Divinity, and suited to the ordinary Capacity of all serious Professors. We must not fend our hearers to intricate distinctions, to learn the meaning of the Doctrine of their Justification. The sense of the Gospel is plain enough in this thing, they that run may read it. Come, come, you shall never be charged at the Last Day, for giving too much to *Christ* in the matter of Justification. You are bound to ascribe all to him, and you shall never be charged for giving too much. And certainly

if it be possible to err on that hand, I had rather err in giving too much then too little to Christ. Do you think that a true Believer, who doth not look upon the act of Faith or Works of Holiness to be any part of his justifying Righteousness; but casts himself upon Christ, do you think, I say, that God will reprove such a person at the last day for ascribing too much to Christ, and not pleading his own Righteousness? Certainly a Believer cannot plead the Righteousness of Christ without Faith; his way of arguing from Christ will sufficiently evince the truth and reality of his Faith; there needs no other proof and demonstration of it,

I should have made some Application. I will tell you what I intended.

First, to those who ground their Justification upon the Sandy Foundation of their Inherent Righteousness; I would exhort them to pull down the House presently before it fall upon their heads; and lay a better Foundation, if ever they think to stand before the Son of Man in his Day.

Then I should exhort them, and press them to study other Arguments, (as there are very many) to promote Good Works and practical Holiness among men; and not jettison Christ to make room for self Righteousness in the matter of Justification. What, must we work for Life still? To work for Justification is to work for Life, and why shoud we thus turn the Gospel into the Law?

I should speak also to those who are built upon the Right Foundation, and have cast themselves upon Christ's Righteousness for Justification unto Life, Let such be careful to maintain good Works; let them be Exemplary in the practise of them, and bring forth fruit meet for the Kingdom of God. For as the Foundation may be too weak for the Superstructure, so the Superstructure may be too mean for the Foundation, And therefore down with all this Hay, Wood and Stubble, and labour to walk more suitably to that Holy Faith, under the Profession of which you live. Brethren? The unsuitable and uncircumspect lives of Professors, have been the greatest Scandel to the Doctrine of Justification by Faith: It hath opened the Mouths of men against it. Therefore labour to live men into a Conviction of this Truth. Disputes and Words will not do it, till you make it appear, that the Grace of God that hath brought Life and Immortality to light through the Gospel, hath taught you to deny all Ungodliness and Wordly Lusts. This is the way to promote the Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone. You that are built upon the right Foundation had need be careful and circumspect. The House is not yet finished, we do all of us lie open more or less to Storms and Tempests here below, though they cannot throw down the house, yet they may shake the house, the rain may beat into the house, may soak through every room of the house may foul the house, may greatly incommod us and distress us. Therefore keep your Souls in good repair, keep them as tite as you can against Wind and Weather.

And

A Discourse of Faith

And for your Comfort I would have told you that Heaven will mend all the Errors in the Superstructure, if the Foundation be right. God will then take away and separate all these weaknesses and sinful mixtures that now run along with all our Graces, all Cracks and Flawes, the sinkings, and failings, the bendings, and leanings this way and that way in any part of the building, Heaven will mend all, will set all right and straight, when we are Sanctified throughout, and the Top-stone is laid.

FINIS.



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